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DEQ Urges Caution when Returning Home after Gustav

BATON ROUGE -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality urge residents to use caution when returning to hurricane-damaged homes and buildings. In particular, the agencies advise the following precautions to prevent injury.

Be on the alert for leaking containers and reactive household chemicals, like caustic drain cleaners and chlorine bleach. Clearly mark and set aside unbroken containers until they can be properly disposed. Leave damaged or unlabeled chemical containers undisturbed wherever possible.

Keep children and pets away from leaking or spilled chemicals. Do not combine chemicals from leaking or damaged containers, as this may produce dangerous or violent reactions. Do not dump chemicals down drains, storm sewers or toilets. Do not attempt to burn household chemicals.

Building materials may contain hazardous materials such as asbestos that can be breathed in and cause adverse health effects. If materials are suspected to contain asbestos, they should not be disturbed. Some of the most common asbestos-containing materials include boiler/pipe insulation, fireproofing, floor tiles and roofing.

To learn more about activities in EPA Region 6, please visit www.epa.gov/hurricane. For information about the LDEQ's activities, visit <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/>.

For the latest information on Hurricane Gustav, you can visit emergency.louisiana.gov or call the state's emergency hotline at 1-866-288-2484 to listen to a recorded message with the most up-to-date information.